

CLAIMS:

I claim:

1. A method comprising:
5 reading data containing a set of test specifications, wherein the data is in a structured format; and
translating the data from the structured format into a second format for use in test software.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein translating the data the data from the structured format into the second format includes:
assembling a variable list from values contained in the data; and
writing the variable list into a data structure of the test software.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the data structure is contained within a file on a storage device.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein the data structure is contained within memory.
- 20 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the structured format is a table.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the table is contained in a spreadsheet document.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein the spreadsheet file contains a plurality of worksheets.
- 25 8. The method of claim 6, wherein the spreadsheet document is in Microsoft Excel format.
9. The method of claim 5, wherein the table is embedded in a word-processor document.
- 30 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the structured format is a markup language.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the markup language is Extensible Markup Language (XML).

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining whether a particular test specification is absent from the data;

in response to a determination that the particular test specification is absent from the data, supplying a default value for the particular test specification.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the data includes master rules that establish constants or formulas.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the data includes at least one of a product platform, a product code, and a revision number.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the data includes a test list that includes a plurality of tests.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of tests are associated with at least one of a test name, a test method, a test description, test conditions, test limits, and a numerical precision.

17. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

initiating execution of the test software to use the data in the second format.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the test specifications are associated with a machine.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the machine is a circuit.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the circuit is a power supply.

21. A computer program product in a computer-readable medium comprising functional descriptive material that, when executed by a computer, enables the computer to perform acts including:

reading data containing a set of test specifications, wherein the data is in a structured format; and
translating the data from the structured format into a second format for use in test software.

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22. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein translating the data the data from the structured format into the second format includes:

assembling a variable list from values contained in the data; and
writing the variable list into a data structure of the test software.

23. The computer program product of claim 22, wherein the data structure is contained within a file on a storage device.

24. The computer program product of claim 22, wherein the data structure is contained within memory.

25. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the structured format is a table.

26. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein the table is contained in a spreadsheet document.

27. The computer program product of claim 26, wherein the spreadsheet file contains a plurality of worksheets.

28. The computer program product of claim 26, wherein the spreadsheet document is in Microsoft Excel format.

29. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein the table is embedded in a word-processor document.

30. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the structured format is a markup language.

5 31. The computer program product of claim 30, wherein the markup language is Extensible Markup Language (XML).

32. The computer program product of claim 21, comprising additional functional descriptive material that, when executed by a computer, enables the computer to perform additional acts, including:

determining whether a particular test specification is absent from the data;

in response to a determination that the particular test specification is absent from the data, supplying a default value for the particular test specification.

33. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the data includes master rules that establish constants or formulas.

34. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the data includes at least one of a product platform, a product code, and a revision number.

35. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the data includes a test list that includes a plurality of tests.

36. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the plurality of tests are associated with at least one of a test name, a test computer program product, a test description, test conditions, test limits, and a numerical precision.

37. The computer program product of claim 21, comprising additional functional descriptive material that, when executed by a computer, enables the computer to perform additional acts, including:

initiating execution of the test software to use the data in the second format.

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38. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the test specifications pertain to functioning of a machine.

39. The computer program product of claim 38, wherein the machine is a circuit.

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40. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein the circuit is a power supply.

41. A data processing system comprising:

means for reading data containing a set of test specifications, wherein the data is in a structured format; and

means for translating the data from the structured format into a second format for use in test software.

42. The data processing system of claim 41, wherein translating the data the data from the structured format into the second format includes:

assembling a variable list from values contained in the data; and

writing the variable list into a data structure of the test software.

43. The data processing system of claim 42, wherein the data structure is contained within a file on a storage device.

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44. The data processing system of claim 42, wherein the data structure is contained within memory.

30 45. The data processing system of claim 41, wherein the structured format is a table.

46. The data processing system of claim 45, wherein the table is contained in a spreadsheet document.

47. The data processing system of claim 46, wherein the spreadsheet file contains a plurality of worksheets.

48. The data processing system of claim 46, wherein the spreadsheet document is in Microsoft Excel format.

49. The data processing system of claim 45, wherein the table is embedded in a word-processor document.

50. The data processing system of claim 41, wherein the structured format is a markup language.

51. The data processing system of claim 50, wherein the markup language is Extensible Markup Language (XML).

52. The data processing system of claim 41, further comprising:
means for determining whether a particular test specification is absent from the data;
means responsive to a determination that the particular test specification is absent from the data, for supplying a default value for the particular test specification.

53. The data processing system of claim 41, wherein the data includes master rules that establish constants or formulas.

54. The data processing system of claim 41, wherein the data includes at least one of a product platform, a product code, and a revision number.

55. The data processing system of claim 41, wherein the data includes a test list that includes a plurality of tests.

56. The data processing system of claim 41, wherein the plurality of tests are associated with at least one of a test name, a test data processing system, a test description, test conditions, test limits, and a numerical precision.

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57. The data processing system of claim 41, further comprising:
means for initiating execution of the test software to use the data in the second format.

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58. The data processing system of claim 41, wherein the test specifications are associated with a machine.

59. The data processing system of claim 58, wherein the machine is a circuit.

60. The data processing system of claim 59, wherein the circuit is a power supply.